

## Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
----- 008666

P 221243Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7236

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MADRID 7210

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, SP

SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER'S COMMENTS ON DOMESTIC INTERNAL  
SITUATION

1. FOREIGN MINISTER OREJA LUNCHEDED PRIVATELY WITH ME  
SEPTEMBER 21, AND DURING THE COURSE OF A LONG CON-  
VERSATION HE COMMENTED ON INTERNAL POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS.

2. HE DWELT AT SOME LENGTH ON THE BASQUE PROBLEM AND  
THE EFFORTS THAT HE HAS MADE WITH A GROUP OF 17 OF THE  
MOST REPRESENTATIVE OF THE BASQUE MAYORS TO TRY TO DEAL  
WITH SOME OF THEIR OUTSTANDING CONCERNS. HE HAD  
AGREED TO MEET WITH THE MAYORS BECAUSE HIS CREDENTIALS  
AS A BASQUE ARE IN EXCELLENT ORDER, I CAN PERSONALLY  
ATTEST TO THE FACT THAT OREJA OCCUPIES A VERY SPECIAL  
POSITION IN THE BASQUE COUNTRY. OREJA SAID THAT  
ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL PROBLEMS IS THE FEELING THAT  
THE CIVIL GUARD HAVE MORE POWER IN MUNICIPALITIES  
THAN THE MAYORS THEMSELVES AND THAT THE CIVIL GUARDS  
REPRESENT ALMOST A FOREIGN INVASION. SOME STUDY  
IS BEING GIVEN TO THE POSSIBILITY OF RAISING MUNI-  
CIPAL POLICE FORCES WHO WOULD BE RESPONSIVE TO THE  
MAYOR. ALSO IMPORTANT TO THESE MAYORS IS THE RE  
ESTABLISHMENT OF THE RIGHTS (FUEROS), WHICH TRADITIONALLY  
BELONGED TO THE PROVINCES OF VISCAYA AND GUIPUZCOA AND  
WHICH HAD BEEN ANNULLED BY FRANCO IN 1937. BASQUE  
SOURCES HAVE TOLD ME THAT A SUCCESSFUL VISIT OF THE KING  
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TO THE BASQUE AREA COULD ONLY BE ASSURED IF HE CAME TO

ABROGATE THE 1937 FRANCO ABOLITION OF THESE RIGHTS.  
AS A RESULT OF OREJA'S CONTACTS WITH THE BASQUE  
MAYORS, HE HAD THEN RECOMMENDED TO MINISTER OF THE  
INTERIOR MARTIN VILLA (OF WHOM HE SPOKE HIGHLY) THAT  
HE SHOULD GO TO THE BASQUE COUNTRY TO EXAMINE IN  
DEPTH THE VARIOUS COMPLAINTS AND CLAIMS, INCLUDING THE  
"NON-ISSUE" OF THE BASQUE FLAG. MARTIN VILLA IS NOW DOING  
THIS, BUT THE VISIT HAS NOT BEEN AN UNQUALIFIED SUCCESS,  
NOT BECAUSE OF ANYTHING MARTIN VILLA HAS DONE, BUT RATHER  
THE INABILITY OF THE BASQUE SOMETIMES TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES  
CLEARLY TO A NON-BASQUE. OREJA SAID THAT HE WOULD CONTINUE  
TO WORK ON THE BASQUE PROBLEM BECAUSE THERE WAS  
ALWAYS THE DANGER THAT THE RIGHTISTS WOULD STIR UP  
THE BASQUE PROBLEM FOR THEIR OWN ENDS.

3. OREJA TOLD ME THAT HE HAD BEEN ONE OF THE FOUR  
MEMBERS OF THE DRAFTING COMMITTEE TO PREPARE THE  
POLITICAL REFORM BILL. THE BILL WAS NOW IN THE  
NATIONAL COUNCIL AND HE SAID HE HAD BEEN TOLD BY THE  
MINISTER OF THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT THAT THERE SHOULD  
BE NO DIFFICULTY IN THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FINISHING  
UP ITS WORK BY OCTOBER 6. THE COUNCIL MIGHT WELL  
MAKE SOME SUGGESTIONS AND PARTICULARLY WITH REGARD  
TO STRENGTHENING THE POWERS OF THE SENATE (TO WHICH  
THE NATIONAL COUNCIL WOULD LIKEN ITSELF) BUT THE OPINION  
OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL WAS NOT BINDING. THE BILL WOULD  
THEN GO TO THE CORTES WHERE URGENCY PROCEDURE WOULD BE  
APPLIED. OBVIOUSLY THERE WOULD BE MORE PROBLEMS HERE,  
BUT HE COULD TELL ME PRIVATELY THAT SUAREZ HAD MADE  
CLEAR THAT IF THE CORTES DID NOT APPROVE THE DRAFT BILL,  
A DECREE WOULD BE ISSUED DISSOLVING THE CORTES AND THE  
GOVERNMENT WOULD PROCEED BY DECREE LAW. IN ANY EVENT,  
HE BELIEVED THAT THE BILL WOULD BE READY TO GO TO  
REFERENDUM NO LATER THAN THE FIRST OF DECEMBER,  
ALLOWING SOME TIME BETWEEN FINAL CORTES ACTION AND  
THE REFERENDUM DATE FOR THE PREPARATION FOR THE  
REFERENDUM. OREJA SAID THAT PRESENT PLANS CALL FOR  
GENERAL ELECTIONS TO BE HELD AT THE LATEST IN JUNE,  
BUT PROBABLY EARLIER, POSSIBLY MAY.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MADRID 7210

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4. OREJA WENT ON TO COMMENT ABOUT PRESENT POLITICAL GROUPINGS. AT THE PRESENT TIME, IT WAS CLEAR THAT FRAGA WAS WORKING CLOSELY WITH RIGHTIST ELEMENTS TO TRY TO PUT TOGETHER A LARGE RIGHTIST PARTY CONSISTING OF THOSE WHO WOULD APPEAL TO THE FRANCO TRADITION, ALTHOUGH NOT NECESSARILY TO THE MAINTENANCE IN PLACE OF ALL OF FRANCO'S INSTITUTIONS. FRAGA OBVIOUSLY WAS MORE COMFORTABLE IN RETURNING TO THE RIGHT WHERE HE PROPERLY BELONGED. WITH REGARD TO CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS, SPANISH CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS SHOULD NOT BE SEEN IN THE SAME LIGHT AS THEY ARE ELSEWHERE IN EUROPE. BASICALLY THEY HAVE A LEFTIST CAST, PARTLY DERIVING FROM DESIRES OF CERTAIN OF THEIR LEADERS, SUCH AS RUIZ GIMENEZ AND GIL ROBLES, TO WASH AWAY THE PAST IN ONE CASE AND TO JUSTIFY THE PAST IN ANOTHER CASE. THESE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS BELONGED CLEARLY IN THE LEFT-CENTER ALONG WITH THE SOCIALISTS. OREJA WENT ON THAT IN HIS VIEW AND THAT OF HIS TACITO FRIENDS AND OSORIO AND SUAREZ, THERE WAS A CENTER WHICH WAS NOT COMFORTABLE WITH EITHER THE RIGHT OR THE LEFT. IT WAS IN THIS AREA OF THE POLITICAL ARC THAT OREJA SAID HE AND HIS FRIENDS WANTED TO ORGANIZE A POLITICAL GROUPING. THE PROBLEM WAS THAT IT WAS HARD TO DO THIS WHILE THEY WERE IN THE GOVERNMENT. I COMMENTED THAT I SEEMED TO ME THAT IT WAS PRECISELY BECAUSE THIS GROUP WAS IN THE GOVERNMENT THAT THEY SHOULD START WITHOUT DELAY TO ORGANIZE A CENTER PARTY. OTHERWISE, THE RIGHT AND THE LEFT WOULD

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BE GETTING A JUMP ON THEM, AND PRESUMABLY THE NEW GOVERNMENT WOULD BE A REFLECTION OF THE ELECTION RESULTS.

5. OREJA THEN WENT ON TO EXPRESS THE GOVERNMENT'S INCREASING CONCERN OVER THE FAILURE OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY TO TAKE ANY STEPS TOWARD LEGALIZATION PRIOR TO THE CONGRESS WHICH IT IS SCHEDULED TO HOLD IN NOVEMBER. OREJA SAID HE HAD TALKED ABOUT THIS WITH THE KING MORNING OF SEPTEMBER 20 AND THERE WAS A GROWING FEELING WITH THE GOVERNMENT, PARTICULARLY THE PRIME MINISTER,

THAT UNLESS THE SOCIALISTS DID SOMETHING ABOUT LEGAL-  
IZING, THE CONGRESS COULD NOT BE HELD. I TOLD OREJA  
THAT MY UNDERSTANDING WAS THAT WHILE THE EXECUTIVE  
COMMITTEE OF THE PSOE PRIVATELY FAVORED ACTION TOWARD LEGAL-  
IZATION, IT BELIEVED THAT IT REALLY MUST BE UP TO THE CONGRESS  
TO DECIDE THE ISSUE. I ADDED MY OWN THOUGHT THAT THE  
GOVERNMENT WOULD BE MAKING A GREAT ERROR IF AFTER  
PERMITTING THE UGT TO HOLD A CONGRESS, IT BANNED  
THE PSOE CONGRESS WHICH IS TO BE ATTENDED BY SOME OF  
THE EUROPEAN SOCIALIST LEADERS. THIS ACTION COULD ONLY  
UNDO MUCH OF THE CREDIT ITS PRESENT GOVERNMENT HAS  
GAINED IN THE PAST WEEKS. OREJA EXPRESSED INTEREST  
IN THE POSITION OF THE PSOE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND  
SAID THAT EVEN SOME COMMUNICATION FROM THAT COMMITTEE  
TO THE EFFECT THAT IT ENDORSED LEGALIZATION WOULD HELP  
THE GOVERNMENT. HE AGREED THAT BANNING OF THE CONGRESS  
WOULD BE A MISTAKE. HE TOLD ME THAT THE ARGUMENT WAS  
THAT IF THE PSOE MADE NO STEP TOWARD LEGALIZATIN AND  
STILL HELD A CONGRESS, WHAT THEN WOULD PREVENT THE  
COMMUNIST PARTY (PCE) FROM DOING THE SAME. OREJA  
CLEARLY IS MOST ANXIOUS TO FIND SOME COMPROMISE WITH  
THE PSOE.

6. OREJA ALSO COMMENTED THAT THE PCE IS DOING WHAT IT  
CAN TO BLOCK CONTACTS BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE  
DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION. THE PCE OBVIOUSLY OBJECTS TO  
BEING EXCLUDED FROM DIRECT DIALOGUE AND THEREFORE  
IS PLAYING A SPOILING GAME.

7. FINALLY, OREJA SAID HE LOOKED FORWARD TO BEING  
ABLE TO GIVE THE SECRETARY A BRIEF RUNDOWN OF SPANISH  
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INTERNAL POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS.  
STABLER

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## Message Attributes

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